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five tea-parties therein chronicled; but I made, by way of compensation, a new enemy when I returned the "Sonata," confessing that its nastiness did not atone for its dulness. I weakly temporized with a third friend by wading through "Diana of the Crossways" and frankly saying that I had found it verbose and tedious to the last degree.

Why cannot the good and the semi-good leave us—the bad—alone in our iniquity? We don't go telling them they must read Scott and Dickens and Thackeray, not to mention such purposeless and moralless authors as Dumas and Cooper and Reade and Collins, and all the purveyors of pure stimulants. Genuine fiction does not need any "booming." Why must we, who have our own normal appetites, be adjured on every rock and dead-wall to "ask your druggist for" a poor brand of liquor masquerading as a literary bitters? There should be a Society for the Protection of Mental Scenery against the desecration of the advertising artist.

JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE.

#### IV.

##### A PLEA FOR PEDANTS.

WHY is it that pedants are generally so ridiculed? Is it not lucky for a man that he *can* contract an intense, even an extravagant, fondness for some pursuit,—some specific study, art, or science,—which he will consequently understand better than other men, and in solving whose problems he may become an expert? What is a man good for without professional enthusiasm,—who does not give his whole soul to his calling, concentrating upon it all his energies, and loving it with an ardor that almost ignores the existence of any other? "No man," says Emerson, "can do anything well, who does not think that what he does is the centre of the visible universe." It is easy to declaim against "one-idealism," "intellectual narrowness," and "a" that"; but, in spite of the cheap eloquence and fashionable cant of superficially-omniscient men who plume themselves upon their fancied oceanic breadth and depth, we love to see a man magnify his calling, even if he does overrate its relative importance. It is only thus that he can achieve excellence or eminence.

Who are the men that make their mark on the world, and to what do they owe their celebrity and influence? Are they the men who have the most versatility and the most varied culture? No; they are those whose minds want balance, who have some giant faculty developed at the expense of the rest. The very deadness of perception thus induced promotes self-confidence and positiveness. Occasionally, at long intervals in the history of humanity, a person appears who wings his flight to the peaks of greatness by an equal flapping of his wings; but all the rest gain their motion like a mill-wheel—by a continued fall of water on one side. The want of balance, it has been truly said, is the cause of most motion, and therefore the minds that stir the stagnant pool of common thought are out of equilibrium, and propelled by this very cause, like a pith figure loaded with a leaden foot, to spring with impatient yet effective force in some providentially-prescribed direction. Once in four or five centuries the world beholds a Leonardo da Vinci or a Leibnitz; but few of their fellow-mortals can fully master more than one art or science,—all beyond is a miserable affectation and a downright waste of time. What Michael Angelo said of painting is true of every other art or craft,—"It is jealous, and requires the whole man."

The day of universal scholars is past. The measure of a man's learning to-day is the amount of his voluntary ignorance; the measure of his practical force is the amount he is content to leave unattempted. We cannot, therefore, admire the man who, instead of being devoted to one great art,—"*married to that immortal bride*,"—woos all the muses in turn; not content to be a painter, sculptor, or writer, unless he is also "chemist, statesman, fiddler, and buffoon." There is no end of acquisition, if one begins to dabble in all the *ologies* and *isms* which may be intrinsically valuable, or which, if possessed, may add a feather to his reputation. Give us a thousand times, rather, the glorious pedantry of Fielding's Parson Adams, who thought a schoolmaster the greatest character in the world, and himself the greatest schoolmaster in it! We smile when we are told of the French grammarian, Dagues-

seau, who, when told that a revolution had broken out in Paris, replied, "Never mind; I have in my portfolio thirty-six conjugations, all completed"; and, again, when we hear of Dr. George, who shrewdly suspected that Frederic the Great, with all his victories, could not conjugate a Greek verb in *mí*. But this very exclusiveness—this absorption in one pursuit—is the secret of all power. Was Vestris, the French dancing-master, guilty of coxcombry or falsehood in declaring that Voltaire and himself were the two greatest men in all Europe? No, assuredly; he but manifested a proper feeling of enthusiasm for his art, and it would have been downright hypocrisy for him to have pretended to think otherwise.

Sydney Smith, in satirizing the classical education at the English universities, says that "the Parr or the Bentley of his day would be scandalized to be put on a level with the discoverer of a neutral salt." And why not, prithee? Can we expect a great scholar, who has devoted a life to his calling to deem any other of equal rank and importance? Shall a painter be required to feel the same admiration for the works of Mozart and Handel as for those of Raphael and Titian? Why should *not* the Greek or Latin scholar, who has "scorned delights and lived laborious days" to possess himself of those stubborn tongues, "glory in the detection of an anapest in the wrong place, or in the restoration of a dative case which Cranzius has passed over, and the never-dying Ernesti failed to observe"? What if a grammarian *does* "tower and plume himself," as Sir Thomas Browne says that he has known one to do, "over a line of Horace, and show more pride in the construction of one ode than the author in the composure of the whole book"? We see nothing ridiculous in this; it is but the natural result of a passionate and absorbing love for one's pursuit.

We are told of Baron Masères, with whom the study of abstract arithmetic was a passion, that his leading idea seemed to have been to calculate more decimal places than any one could possibly want, and to print the works of all who had done the same thing. What mathematician ever signally distinguished himself whose devotion to his science was not thus exclusive? Who would employ in a great suit a lawyer who does not bristle all over with *nolle prosequi* and *certioraris* and *sur-rebutters*, and shed tears of admiration over his Coke upon Littleton and his Fearnce on "Contingent Remainders"? It is only the blockhead or hypocrite who never goes crazy with enthusiasm. "A London apprentice who did not admire the Lord Mayor's coach," says Hazlitt, "would stand a good chance of coming to be hanged." In short, to excel greatly in any profession there should be an exclusiveness, a bigotry, a blindness of attachment to it, which will make every other seem insignificant in comparison.

The world holds the same view. It will not believe in the depth of a many-sided man. To what but this were due the doubt and detraction which dogged Bulwer all his days? Had he been a novelist only, instead of being the "Admirable Crichton" of letters,—novelist, essayist, satirist, dramatist, poet, historian, orator,—he would have held a far higher and more undisputed place in the literary Wal-halla. It was said by Jules Janin of Édouard Fournier: "*Cet homme là sait tout; il ne sait que cela; mais il le sait bien*"; yet Fournier, in spite of his encyclopædic culture, is an obscure man of letters.

Even when it is shown in a reprehensible calling, one cannot but admire an absorbing enthusiasm. Froissart, in his "Chronicles," tells of a reverend monk who had been a robber in his early life, and who, growing old, used pathetically to lament that he had ever changed his profession. He said "it was a goodly sight to sally out from his castle, and to see a troop of jolly friars come riding that way, with their mules well laden with viands and rich stores, to advance toward them, to attack and overthrow them, returning to the castle with a noble booty." Even the veriest villain, if he be a consummate villain, must be more content and better pleased with himself than his half-faced counterfeit; and thus simply through his force and determination of character. We should have, too, more hope of reclaiming him and making him a blessing to the world, than of reforming the cold, heartless block of a scoundrel in whom to kindle enthusiasm for anything, good or bad, would be like "creating a soul under the ribs of death."

WILLIAM MATHEWS.